

ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙНИЙ ВИМІР СУЧАСНИХ СУСПІЛЬСТВ

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CHOSEN CHAPTERS FROM “EVERYDAY SURVEILLANCE: VIGILANCE AND VISIBILITY IN POSTMODERN LIFE”¹

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The chosen chapters of W. J. Staples “Everyday surveillance...” are dedicated to the analysis of the processes that were founded during Enlightenment and resulted in the formation of the specific system of social control based on extensive application of audio-visual and informational surveillance. Author underlines the possible problems and dangers caused by the technologies that were created to optimize the social policy.

Key words: social control, surveillance, postmodern society.

Birth of the Modern

The roots of modernity lie in the post-Renaissance period from the mid-sixteenth century until about the early 1800s, a period often referred to as the Enlightenment. From this age came a fundamental break from medieval tradition and religious dogmas. Unfettered by such constraints, the idea emerged that autonomous, universal, human “reason”, not simply God’s laws, would bring certainty, hope, and progress to the world. Indeed, the Enlightenment is credited with giving birth to a near-utopian vision of a future in which human emancipation and “enlightened” thinking would prevail. As these ideas and practices took hold, more traditional forms of social, economic, and cultural life began to crumble under the weight of changes in economic organization, scientific experimentation, and the rise of democratic states and rational law.

This movement intensified and culminated in the birth of the modern era—for our purposes, from around the turn of the nineteenth century and continuing through the first half of the twentieth century. We can summarize the main themes and characteristics of modernity as follows:

An increased rationalizing or calculating attitude toward social life based on notions of efficiency, predictability, control, and discipline, epitomized by the emergence of the factory and machine-based capitalism.

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The progressive differentiation of social life in the division of labor, specialization of occupation, and separation of the “public” and “private”, “home” and “work” life.

The rise of large-scale state and private organizations and bureaucracies as well as large, urban centers.

The acceleration or “compression” of time-space relations—a fast-paced world that is made “smaller” by emerging modes of transportation and communication.

The rise of a relatively large middle and professional class with its own self-interest, sensibilities, and culture.

The development of the “human sciences” such as psychology, psychiatry, sociology, criminology, demography, statistics, and public health.

The institutionalization of the belief in progress, driven by the idea that scientific knowledge, objective reasoning, and technology could harness nature and change social life and human existence for the better.

Modernity’s achievements were considerable. It gave birth to democratic movements in the West that increased personal freedoms and liberties for most, including (eventually) minorities, women, and the propertyless classes. Governments regulated social relations and put in place rational systems of law, justice, monetary exchange, schooling, and social welfare systems. Driven by the dynamic and technology-based system of capitalism, transportation, communication, and utility systems proliferated, while literacy expanded and the standard of living increased as consumer goods became readily available. Scientific experimentation, medical discoveries, and public health and sanitation movements helped wipe out diseases and reduce various forms of human suffering.

Yet modernity has always had its detractors. Karl Marx (1818–1883) wrote about the devastating poverty, exploitation, and alienation that he saw in nineteenth-century capitalism. The French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858–1917) considered how geographic and class mobility and the loss of tradition in culture were likely to produce a feeling of anomie, or normlessness, on the part of many. The German social scientist Max Weber (1864–1920) offered the view that modernity’s distinctive “formal rationality” — as epitomized in large, bureaucratic organizations — represented an “iron cage” that would ultimately entrap us. And, an even darker view is found in the writings of anti-Enlightenment philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900).

Nietzsche offered a direct challenge to the optimistic worldview of the Enlightenment and the so-called advances of modernity. For Nietzsche, this period’s “progress”, the discovery of absolute “Truths”, and its scientific and technical “innovation” were more about what he called the “Will to Power”: the human drive to dominate nature and the environment. While Nietzsche praised the critical spirit of the Enlightenment, he disputed those who claimed to have discovered universal moral codes and systems of reason, since he believed that given the diversity of human nature, such codes could not apply to everyone. This meant that individuals asserting law-like standards must necessarily place themselves — morally, socially, and culturally — above others, thereby dominating them. From a Nietzschean perspective, the history of recent human experience is not a simple procession of higher universal morals and higher standards of reason. Rather, driven by the desire for some ultimate “Truth” and knowledge, humans have produced one system of domination after the other. (As it was once put, we “progressed” in the twentieth century, for example, from “the slingshot to the megaton bomb”). In this view, knowledge

cannot be separated from power. The ideological system of Enlightenment reason, rationality, and progress is seen as just that: another ideology, another interpretation of reality, advanced by one group over others, rather than some ultimate, final, “Truth”.

For Nietzsche, then, as well as for Weber and, later, for Foucault, the post-Enlightenment period is one of increasing domination masked in a guise of emancipation and humanitarianism. As one writer put it, “awakening in the classical world like a sleeping giant, reason finds chaos and disorder everywhere and embarks on a rational ordering of the social, attempting to classify and regulate all forms of experience” [1].

Foucault suggests that rather than a utopian dream of freedom, late-eighteenth-century politicians, philosophers, and jurists offered a blueprint for a military model of society in which discipline and self-control would become a central organizing theme. Uniform precision, bodily discipline, rigid hierarchies, and “the drill” designed to mold and shape the body would become techniques of social control that could easily be adapted beyond the military camps and hospitals where these techniques were discovered and perfected. The modern individual was born, according to Foucault, into a sea of regulations, petty rules and subrules, and fussy inspections, a world where the supervision of the smallest fragments of life and of the body takes place in the context of the school, the barracks, the hospital, and the workshop [2].

The experiences that Foucault saw as the most vulnerable to rationalization, scientific inquiry, and official scrutiny were madness, criminality, poverty, forms of deviance, and even sexuality. With Enlightenment zeal, late-eighteenth century ideologues turned their attention from the control of nature to the manipulation of “man” by way of the emerging knowledge of the “human sciences”. This movement is reflected in the early writings in penology and criminology, psychology, neurology, and demography. In other words, in new and important ways, human beings—our bodies, minds, and behaviors—became the *subject* of scientific inquiry and the *object* of its passions. The rise of the human sciences as a topic of inquiry is closely linked with the emergence of new “disciplinary technologies” designed to treat the human body *as an object* to be broken down, analyzed, and improved. This is a crucial turn of events. Rather than focusing on dominating the world around them, late-Enlightenment scholars turned the Will to Power on the human race. Rational and scientific knowledge and discourses (that is, systems of language overlapping with cultural practices), along with bureaucratic organizations, provided the means to classify, regulate, exclude, and even eliminate any human behavior deemed outside an increasingly narrow definition of “normal”. Some would argue that, say, Nazi Germany or Stalinist Russia were, rather than some aberration in the course of human progress, a natural outcome of the rational, calculating mind of modernity. As Foucault once said, both regimes “used and extended mechanisms already present in most other societies. More than that: in spite of their own internal madness, they used to a large extent the ideas and the devices of our political rationality” [3].

So, it would seem that this is the historical context of how we in the West got the idea that we could, regardless of an individual’s particular “defect”, reconstruct a more idealized person if only he or she could be subjected to the right disciplinary regime.

Bentham’s Panopticon

Amid the array of modern disciplinary practices, Foucault chose to highlight what he considered to be an exemplar in the operation of modern disciplinary technology: the Panopticon.

In 1791, British utilitarian philosopher, economist, and jurist Jeremy Bentham (1748 - 1832) printed a collection of letters he had written under the long-winded yet informative title of *Panopticon; or, The Inspection-House: Containing the Idea of a New Principle of Construction Applicable to any Sort of Establishment, in Which Persons of any Description are to be Kept Under Inspection; and Particular to Penitentiary-Houses, Prisons, Poor-Houses, Lazarettos, Houses of Industry, Manufactories, Hospitals, Work-Houses, Mad-Houses, and Schools with A Plan of Management Adapted to the Principle*. The detailed architectural design for the Panopticon called for the construction of a building with a central tower that contained the “inspector’s lodge”. Around the lodge, in a circular form, was a set of peripheral cells with windows in the rear and front of each cell so that, in effect, the cell space was backlit. The prisoner (lunatic, schoolboy, or other inmate) could then be subjected to the constant observation of the person occupying the lodge. Bentham himself anticipated the “politics of trouble” when he emphasized that the goal of docility could be easily achieved with the Panopticon design, “[n]o matter how different or opposite the purpose: whether it be that of punishing the incorrigible, guarding the insane, reforming the vicious, confining the suspected, employing the idle, maintaining the helpless, curing the sick, [or] instructing the willing”.

The Panopticon reversed the principles of the dungeon; it was about light and visibility rather than darkness and isolation. Yet the person under inspection would be kept in the dark, in another sense, as the lodge would be constructed with an elaborate Venetian-blind effect that Bentham called the “inspector’s lantern”: a sort of one-way mirror that masked the presence or absence of an observer. Bentham created this device because, according to his very efficient plans, the inspector would also function as the institution’s bookkeeper. Yet if he performed this task, his lamp would give away his presence to the inmates. So, Bentham designed the lantern so that the only thing the inmates could see was a dark spot at the center of the aperture. With this scheme, the inmates may or may not be under constant surveillance; they just think or imagine that they are. As Bentham put it, they are “awed to silence by an invisible eye”. The inmates have therefore internalized what Foucault called *le regard*, or the “gaze” of the authorities, and, in effect, they watch and render themselves docile. In this way, power operates without coercion, force, or violence, automatically and continuously, whether or not the tower is occupied at all. With this technology, Bentham created an all-seeing, all-knowing “God” that was, in reality, nothing more than a dark spot in the lantern. In Bentham’s words, “in a Panopticon the inspector’s back is never turned”. And he asserted the productive benefits of his design for the “inspection-house” in the opening lines of his treatise: “Morals reformed—health preserved—industry invigorated—instruction diffused—public burdens lightened . . . —all by a simple idea in architecture!” [4]

While the design for the Panopticon was never adopted in its pure form, many of its principles were deployed, and it stimulated considerable discussion and new techniques for social control. But the fact that it had limited direct impact did not diminish its importance, Foucault argued. Its significance lay in the very idea that such a design was thought to be necessary or desirable at the time. The Panopticon remains both an important symbol of modern disciplinary technology and a basic principle on which many forms of contemporary surveillance operate.

The Transparent Society

If postmodern culture is characterized by an implosion of previously accepted boundaries, we see, as well, the disintegration of the barriers that once offered us some form of sanctuary.

“Such a society”, according to Ronald Corbett and Gary Marx, “is transparent and porous. Information leakage is rampant. Barriers and boundaries—distance, darkness, time, walls, windows, and even skin, which have been fundamental to our conceptions of privacy, liberty and individuality—give way”²⁰. This condition has been brought about by the emergence of what Marx calls the “new surveillance”: an optical revolution engendered by a dizzying array of digitized, computer/video/telecommunication devices that have made watching and monitoring deftly penetrating yet seamless and hidden. In our post-Cold War world, certain government agencies and former defense contractors have found a lucrative market in the “security” business. With developments in night-vision technology, auditory devices, and telecommunications monitoring, the state, as well as private organizations and individuals, has an arsenal of surveillance gadgets at its disposal. In the next few sections I introduce some of them.

The video camera, for example, has fundamentally altered the nature of policing as well as the entire U.S. justice system. Videocams, mounted on the dashboards of patrol cars, have become a central feature in the daily lives of the police and those they encounter. Activated automatically whenever an officer turns on the car’s flashing lights, the devices are a “real asset to everyone involved”, according to one law enforcement official. “Tapes can be played in court”, states a news article, “to give jurors an unadulterated account of the crime. Instead of hearing disputed testimony about a drunk driver’s impaired driving, for instance, jurors could see the car weaving. The footage also serves for unimpeachable evidence of evaluating deputies. Video of an officer’s conduct—correct or incorrect—could be used in training” [3].

Indeed. On the evening of March 3, 1991, four Los Angeles police officers were secretly videotaped beating unarmed motorist Rodney King. The widespread dissemination of these images created a media spectacle that was turned against the police department and the city. So, in order to shed more light on the subject, law enforcement officials began to experiment with installing video cameras in police cars. The same device used to expose this atrocity would now “protect” both the officers and their suspects. “I think they have the ability to bring credibility back to law enforcement”, states one law enforcement chief about the use of such cameras. “When you’re on TV, you don’t do bad things. The officer acts his best and the actions are documented”. The camera does not discriminate; its gaze is both controlling and productive as it disciplines the conduct of both suspects and police. It provides an elegant solution to the question: “Who is guarding the guards?” demonstrating the role of “hierarchical observation” as each individual carries out the act of watching others while he or she is also being watched. The visual technology not only empowers the calculated gaze and watches and renders the suspect docile but, as Foucault put it, also “constantly supervises the very individuals who are entrusted with the task of supervising” [2].

Like other technologies, videocams are becoming so inexpensive and small they can be used almost anywhere. A “badge-size” camera or “personal video surveillance system” created by Semco Company of Carlsbad, California, sends the image back to the recording unit in the police car. The company says that the device is particularly useful in recording combative suspects and in dealing with false-arrest lawsuits. Video technology is currently used in documenting interrogations and confessions, undercover investigations, lineups, crime scenes and their re-enactment, the testimony of victims and witnesses and the physical condition of suspects during booking, lockups, and on and on. One interesting use of the videocam has been to link judges and defendants during preliminary hearings and other procedural steps in

the justice system. Rather than take the time and incur the cost of transporting numerous offenders to the courthouse from correctional facilities, the participants merely view each other on a monitor—constituting a sort of efficient “virtual” habeas corpus, if you will. Just imagine yourself as a defendant, watching your own preliminary hearing on a video screen while the television in the game room blares reruns of a gritty “reality” justice show or has live coverage of today’s “trial of the century”. The process of “justice” becomes yet another videospace in the day-to-day world of the postmodern.

In Contra Costa, California, the television is used in another way. Here, a county supervisor, the district attorney, and about a dozen custodial parents have gotten together to produce a public-access show they call “Costra County’s Deadbeat Parents”. The show, playing on eleven cable systems in the area, is modeled after the national series America’s Most Wanted and shows a picture of the malfeasant parent while an announcer narrates the person’s height, weight, race, last known occupation, and number of minor children. Each month the show includes a new crop of “deadbeats” from the county’s roster. If viewers identify one of the parents, they are asked to call the district attorney’s office: “We hope you’ll wake up and tap him on the shoulder and say, ‘Hey pal, I’m tired of paying my taxes to support your kids’” [5].

Like the videocams in the police cars, all this tape contributes plenty of grist for the “real” cop and justice shows and other media spectacles. In fact, after years of resisting the intrusion of the camera into the sacrosanct courtroom and police precinct, it seems that some authorities have embraced them as a public relations tool. For example, following the Rodney King beating, the Los Angeles Police Department turned to network TV to help put their officers in a better light. Broadcast in 120 markets nationwide, LAPD: Life on the Beat is in its fourth year on the air. Producers of the thirty-minute show, featuring video footage of officers supposedly going through their shift, claim that it is “the most accurate representation of law enforcement on television”. Yet critics contend it is simply propaganda for the department [6]. Likewise, after several years of resistance, New York City permitted the cable channel Court TV to begin filming a series called The System in and around the 101st Precinct in Far Rockaway. Videocam operators ride along with police, film arrests and bookings, and follow defendants through trial “like a nonfiction version of the NBC drama Law and Order”, according to one news article. But wait: Isn’t Law and Order supposed to be a “reality” drama based on the “true” stories of the justice system? Then is the filming of The System a case of life imitating art that, itself, was supposed to be imitating life? An official from the police commissioner’s office stated that the filming will “help to tell a less-sensational story about the lives of officers and the true nature of police work”. It may also provide a way of keeping his eye on his officers in a department plagued by allegations of police brutality, corruption, and other illegal behavior [7].

Devices and Desires

Recent developments suggest that even our most intimate, private thoughts may be available for official scrutiny. Based on some of the same principles as the polygraph, that is, the measurement of the flow of blood to a limb, the plethysmograph, or “p-graph”, is a narrow metal or rubber band that is placed around the penis of a male subject. The individual is then forced to watch visual displays of naked adults and children or, sometimes, to listen

to audiotapes. The band, of course, measures variation in the circumference of the penis. The accompanying computer software enables the examiner to know which stimulant produced an arousal and the relative degree of the erection. Use of the p-graph has been a favorite technique among sex therapists for more than twenty years, and it is now commercially available and aggressively marketed by several manufacturers. The president of the leading producer of the devices, Farrall Industries, Inc., contends that the device is, indeed, capable of "accurately measuring sexual desire" but that it cannot determine whether someone has committed an offense or is likely to do so in the future. The p-graph is presently being used in over four hundred sex-offender treatment centers in forty states in the United States and in several countries around the world.

Yet the mechanism is, according to one article, "emerging from behind the locked doors of adult treatment centers and into the broader legal arena" and is turning up in sentencing and parole decisions, custody fights, and the like. For example, fathers are being subjected to p-graphs in child custody disputes as lawyers seek to prove that they are - or are not - likely to abuse their children. In a case in New York, a psychologist used the p-graph on a father whose parental rights the county was trying to terminate. He concluded from the test that the father "did not become sexually aroused by either male or female children". But an expert witness for the county disputed the findings on the ground that the test could not predict any potential behavior. At a hospital in Phoenix several years ago, boys as young as ten who were accused of abusing other children were tested with the p-graph. The law seems ill-equipped to deal with questions of privacy and rights since there are no regulations regarding the devices at this time. One therapist acknowledges that "a majority of people who undergo the assessment would prefer not to go through it. It's measuring the one thing left that is supposed to be private" [8].

In an extraordinary case in Maine, a police officer whose name was simply raised in a local sex-abuse case was told he had to submit to a p-graph as a condition of keeping his job. In a bizarre string of accusations, Officer Harrington was one of 170 other people, including a U.S. Senator, who were accused of sexual impropriety by four siblings. While no legal evidence was ever brought against him and he was never formally charged, the district attorney said he had "doubts about the man's character" and wanted "to be sure that the officer didn't have deviant thoughts that might lead to dangerous behavior". As Foucault put it, when one wishes to create a "case" out of the "healthy, normal and law-abiding adult, it is always by asking him how much of the child he has in him, what secret madness lies within him, what fundamental crime he has dreamt of committing" [8, p. 193].

Harrington was ordered to see a sex therapist who requested that he take a sex-offender profile test as well as the p-graph. The written exam determined that Harrington's "personality profile" was supposedly similar to that of about 6 percent of sex offenders. He later refused to take the p-graph. Some in the town suggested that this was a sign of guilt, but some two thousand others began a petition drive to support him. Three years after he was accused, Officer Harrington still had not gotten his job back and was filing a federal lawsuit against the town [8].

Forget Big Brother

When I speak about "everyday surveillance", someone invariably asks, "Who is doing all this? Who's behind it? Who is 'Big Brother'?" "There is no 'Big Brother,'" I tell them;

“we are him”. Rather than appear simply “from the top down” or originate from a small group of identifiable individuals or even a particular organization, the new surveillance and social control practices, I argue, are advanced, directly or indirectly, by all of us. They are not orchestrated by only a few or as part of some master plan that is simply imposed on us; rather, disciplinary power expands “bi-directionally”, flowing from top to bottom and vice versa. So while President Ronald Reagan can issue an executive order that demands that all federal workers be tested for drugs, an ex-auto mechanic can start marketing and selling video cameras to school districts for their buses. While the FBI can help push a wiretap bill through Congress, an employer in your hometown may initiate “integrity” testing of all job applicants. A government agency or giant corporation may set out to create a new surveillance gadget, but it seems just as likely that a university professor will develop one - or, importantly, the basis for a potential one - for no other reason than “curiosity”, or to get a promotion. A young computer software designer may develop a new program because its capabilities are “cool”, rather than seeing it as an employee-monitoring tool. A grade school teacher may get a grant to adopt bar-code scanning in the classroom simply because the technology is there and because to use it “sounds like a good idea”.

This is not to suggest that everyday surveillance emerges “by accident”. Some people have a vested interest in creating and selling new surveillance technologies, while others may be in a position to exercise this kind of control and benefit from it. Yet even they are, ultimately, not exempt from the gaze of that “long hierarchized network” Foucault refers to. We are all involved and enmeshed within a grid of power relations that are highly intentional and purposeful, arrangements that can be more or less hierarchical and unequal but are never simply one-directional. So while a police officer can surveil suspects with a new high-tech scanner, the department can “keep an eye” on that very officer by installing a videocam in the patrol car. Similarly, a teacher can make “normalizing judgments” about students using a computer program, only to find that school administrators can use the same program to assess the teacher’s “performance” in the classroom.

Everyday surveillance, I would argue, is being built on a foundation of seduction, desire, fear, and salvation. We all advance disciplinary power when we go about naively - and with blind faith and sometimes arrogance - trying to “make things better” and always assuming that, in fact, we can. This applies to anyone, across the political spectrum. “The road to hell”, the saying goes, “is paved with good intentions”. While some of the effects I have described in this book may be the “unintended consequences” of such good intentions, they are consequences nonetheless, and, it seems, they are rarely considered in public debate or discourse. We extend the bounds of everyday surveillance when we turn our backs on the important relationship between knowledge and power, when we take science — physical, medical, and social — at its word or assume that all technological change is always “for the better”. There are often seemingly very compelling reasons why decisions are made to test people for drugs, to fingerprint welfare recipients, or to put surveillance cameras on school buses. After all, we need to “deal with the problem” (even if we have little idea of just what the problem actually is) or, better yet, because “something might happen”. Why not take steps to prevent it? We are easily seduced by the image of a protected, peaceful order. We are a people who like things to “work”, to be efficient, to be predictable, to “make sense”. We are easily persuaded and charmed by politicians promising social stability, school administrators ensuring well-behaved children, and developers offering us

the “serene fortress” of the gated community. We desire to eliminate risk, but at what price? Listen to those who become crusaders after a tragedy strikes their lives: the phenomenon (whatever it is - drug addiction, drunk driving, child abduction - it doesn't matter) will be stopped “at all cost”, “to prevent this tragedy from happening to someone else”; “if one life can be saved, it will be worth it”. Will it? Obviously, we want to stop the needless loss of life and injury, but on what basis and with what values do we evaluate the choice between reducing life's risks and tragedies by some unknown amount versus limiting our constitutional rights and personal freedoms? Put another way, is it worth surviving the risks of life only to end up “living” in a surveillance society?

We support, actively or passively, the creation of disciplinary practices, irrationally believing that they will be deployed exclusively “on those other folks”, only to find that we have become the next targets. We facilitate everyday surveillance as well when we consume products that either make us the potential targets of surveillance or, alternatively, give us the tools to watch others. Here, the daily act of consumption - so central to the organization of late capitalism - becomes directly tied to the distribution and spread of disciplinary technology. If the company hasn't already done so, we are quite willing to “wire” ourselves in with “cell” phones, pagers, and e-mail, and we rush to buy the latest products that offer us access to the “Net” and the “Web” (the irony of this new terminology should not be ignored). We post pictures of our families and ourselves on the Web so anyone can see us. We also bring home the machines to monitor our kids' phone calls, to keep an eye on their driving, or even to test them for drugs. We buy the videocams and use them to document our own movements, or we turn them on our friends, neighbors, or strangers. *America's Funniest Home Videos* receives more than two thousand clips a day. According to the host, “everybody gets their Andy Warhol fifteen minutes. It's like driving by and looking into people's windows” [9]. News networks will pay handsomely for amateur tapes of “important” events that they can then broadcast over and over again. In a culture of voyeurs, there is always plenty of footage. Interestingly, as the case of the Rodney King beating illustrates, we can even use these devices to “turn the tables” on those who abuse their position. Some have argued that this signals the democratization of surveillance, offering ordinary citizens the power to challenge authorities [10]. Yet, this strikes me as a contradiction in terms. A democratic society ensures and protects everyone's personal privacy, elites and commoners alike; it does not facilitate universal visibility [11].

The imperative of more and more social control is also a function of fear. Steven Nock claims that increased formal surveillance results from our need to establish “reputations” and trust because, in a society of strangers, “How can we trust the people we see but do not know; those who live near us, who work near us, who must sometimes be counted on to help us?”² Yet, I would argue that, in our contemporary culture, it would seem that the

² As the Web becomes “much like the rest of social life” it mimics what Kuntsler calls the “Sameness of the Suburban Landscape” where “we drive up and down the gruesome, tragic suburban boulevards of commerce, and we're overwhelmed at the fantastic, awesome, stupefying ugliness of absolutely everything in sight.” In this case, we “surf” up and down a mediascape that looks increasingly like those suburban thoroughfares, plastered with the familiarity of franchised advertisements, company logos, and virtual “box stores” ready to sell or, popularly, auction, any conceivable commodity. And we see Disney and other media conglomerates teaming up with the likes of powerhouse Microsoft to saturate the Web with their cultural products, making it look like the all-too-familiar mainstream of Hollywood, cable and tabloid television, HBO, MTV, and the rest. See [12].

“stranger” is more than someone without a reputation; what we really fear is the stranger assumed to exist within us all. In our sometimes hysterical culture, everyone is a potential suspect; otherwise, why would people who have established, “good” reputations still be subjected to surveillance ceremonies? Nock cites the example of the “highly respected civic leader” who is trusted. “His word is believed; his promise accepted” [13]. Yet, at the height of the war on drugs, a proposal was made in my hometown that five city commissioners present themselves for drug screening in order to make a public statement that the town was “drug-free”. The commissioners voted against the proposal, three to two, and the editor of the local newspaper proceeded to question the motives of those who had voted against it. The message is clear: If you refuse to consent to disciplinary rituals, you must have something to hide.

It seems that we indeed trust no one. As I have argued, our primary sources of cultural knowledge, the popular media and cinema, have turned everyday life into a theatrical drama where the most compelling stories are those that recount lives filled with uncertainty, unpredictability, and tragedy. “Watch out! You could be next!” the media scream out. We therefore become convinced that our only recourse against the apparent tide of problems we face is to “keep an eye on” everyone. We are therefore seduced into believing that even our own subjection is an unfortunate but necessary condition. Is fear an irrational response then? No. Not only are the media accounts powerfully convincing, but also our fears are grounded in a certain reality. The United States is a relatively dangerous place; I am not suggesting that crime, youth violence, drugs, and other social ills are not “real”. What I am saying is that we need to be aware of the role played by the media in shaping the process of how we come to “know” and believe we understand the nature of those problems.

This cultural hysteria - generated by docudramas, prime-time sensational journalism, and made-for-TV movies “based on the true story” - creates a fertile market for those selling “science” and the technological “fixes” they claim will bring knowledge and certainty to ease our fears. Political problems become technical ones when we are gripped by fear and we long for the salvation of easy “solutions”. But what have we bargained for when we surrender the fundamental problem of social control to science and technology? Ironically, while the videocam is used to “create” this hysteria through television and the cinema, it is offered as our salvation as well. “Just put up a camera”, they say, and the problems will go away. In the case of the school bus, for example, once the camera is in place, no one has to bother teaching children *why* they should behave, it’s enough just to get them to do it. This begs the question, how will they act when they are not under the gaze of the camera? Of course, the logical outcome of this “solution” is to make sure that they are always under its watchful eye.

How do we maintain anything deserving to be called a democratic society in the face of all this? I am not referring simply to the act of voting (although that is at issue also) as much as I am to the notion of democracy as an ongoing, daily accomplishment that is practiced and maintained both in human relationships and by mediating institutions. Democracy in this sense means not only ensuring our constitutionally given rights but also fostering what we might call the characteristics of a “good society”; a society where citizens are able to maintain a degree of trust in the individuals and organizations that they encounter; a society that is “civil” in every sense of the word; a society that ensures human rights and respects individual privacy and dignity, while at the same time balancing a concern for the “common

good” [14]. For years, social and political scholars have asserted that a fundamental characteristic of such a society is a viable public life—one that includes both public space (e.g., streets, parks, community markets, meeting places, schools, and the like) and a civic discourse (i.e., something such as “public opinion”). If Enlightenment reason and democratic ideals offer us any hope, it is in the notion that people can come together and rationally decide what is in their best interest and for the common good.

But in today’s culture, how is this possible? As more and more of this “public” space is brought under the gaze of surveillance, and as meticulous rituals permeate our daily lives, “there is nowhere to hide”, as Gary Marx puts it. “A citizen’s ability to evade this surveillance is diminishing. To venture into a shopping mall, bank, subway, sometimes even a bathroom is to perform before an unknown audience” [13]. Even if this kind of surveillance is relatively “seamless”, as I have argued, it may function to undermine our willingness to participate in civic life and “to speak our minds as clearly, openly, and imaginatively as we can” [15]. Like those subjected to the gaze of the Panopticon, we are increasingly “awed to silence”, systematically manipulated and progressively unable to question private authority, challenge public officials, or engage in political dissent. We become, in essence, a “docile” citizenry, “disciplinary” subjects rather than democratic ones.

Driven out of the public sphere, we retreat to the “private life” of home only to find that, increasingly, it is not private at all. Here, public opinion has been replaced by the mass-mediated “storytelling” of high-profile media stars who “inform” us about how to vote and what is and what is not a “social problem”. Our homes will be increasingly “hardwired” with new telecommunication links that offer corporations unprecedented access to our habits, buying preferences, and financial status. Meanwhile, some of the same technologies can be used to convert some people’s homes into “virtual” prisons as they are remotely monitored under the watchful eye of authorities or, in other instances, similar devices enable suspicious parents to listen in on their teenagers’ phone calls, to videotape the baby-sitter, or to rifle through each other’s e-mail. With the contemporary blurring of boundaries between notions of “public” and “private”, between “real” freedom and its simulation, it is easy to see how “democracy” could become little more than a media illusion on the postmodern landscape.

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“ЩОДЕННЕ СПОСТЕРЕЖЕННЯ...” РОЗДІЛИ З КНИГИ

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У розділах праці “Щоденне спостереження” розглянуто важливі соціальні процеси, започатковані у добу Просвітництва, які привели до формування у сучасних суспільствах західного світу особливої системи соціального контролю, заснованої на широкому використанні аудіо-візуального та інформаційного спостереження. Наголошено на соціальних проблемах та небезпеках, породжених технологіями, що були покликані вдосконалити процеси соціального управління.

Ключові слова: соціальний контроль, спостереження, паноптикум Бенґама.

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